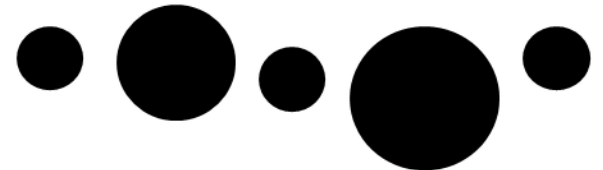
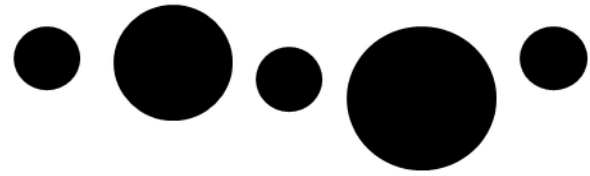




# Welcome to Online Office Hours!

We'll get started at 2PM ET





# Library of Congress **Online Office Hours**

Welcome! We're glad you're here! Use the chat box to introduce yourselves. Let us know:

- **Your first name**
- **Where you're joining us from**
- **Grade level(s) and subject(s) you teach**

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# The Omar Ibn Said Collection at the Library of Congress

Laverne Page

Area Specialist, African Section  
African & Middle Eastern Division





# African & Middle Eastern Reading Room

AFRICAN &amp; MIDDLE EASTERN DIVISION, AREA STUDIES

Find  in  

**Notice:** All Library of Congress research centers will be closed to the public (*including researchers and others with reader identification cards*) until further notice, to reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19 coronavirus. All Library-sponsored public programs are also postponed or cancelled through September 1. Online resources and reference services, such as [Ask a Librarian](#) [www.loc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.loc.gov/coronavirus).

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[The Near East Section](#)

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[Transliteration Tables](#)

### Internet Resources:

[Selected Internet Resources](#)

### Webcasts:

[African Section](#)  
[Hebraic Section](#)  
[Near East Section](#)

### Search our Databases:

[LC Databases & E-Resources](#)  
[LC On-line Catalogs](#)

### Of Interest:

#### Egypt 2008 Web Archive

"In 2008 Egypt witnessed a remarkable experience rich in political and democratic practices, and the sites captured back then should be revisited in the context of current events... All in all, this collection of websites represents emerging expressionism by Egyptian



From left: 18th century Middle East book binding; The Washington Haggadah; Kente Cloth

## Of Special Interest:

**new** [Persian Language Rare Materials](#)

**new** [Eltaher Collection - Palestinian Pamphlets](#)

**new** [Omar Ibn Said Collection](#)

[Abdul-Hamid II Digital Collection of Books and Serials Gifted to the Library of Congress](#)

### Friends Groups:

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[Support the Hebraic Section](#)  
[Support the Near East Section](#)

## Upcoming Events

### Location:

101 Independence Ave. SE  
 Thomas Jefferson Building, LJ 229  
 Washington, D.C. 20540-4660  
 2nd Floor Jefferson Building  
[View Maps and Floor Plans](#)

### Hours:

Monday - Friday: 8:30am - 5:00pm  
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(important information prior to your visit)

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# African and Middle Eastern Division


<https://www.loc.gov/rr/amed/>





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AFRICAN &amp; MIDDLE EASTERN DIVISION, AREA STUDIES

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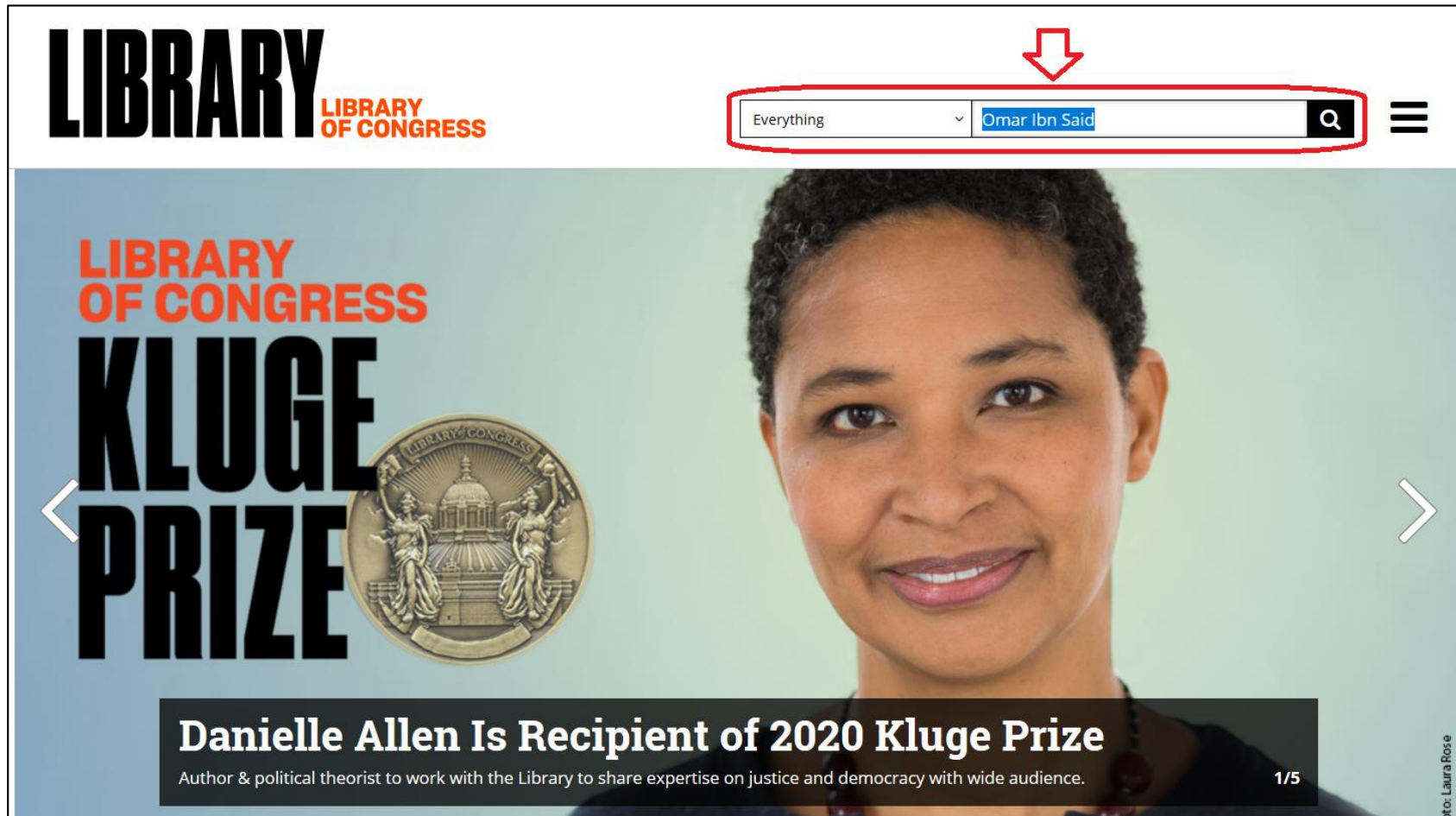
(important information prior to your visit)

**Free Wi-Fi is available**  
in our Reading Room

[Research and Reference Services](#)  
[Research and Reference FAQ's](#)

Link to the  
Omar Ibn Said  
Collection

You can also access the collection from the Library of Congress' main page ([www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)), by searching “Omar Ibn Said”



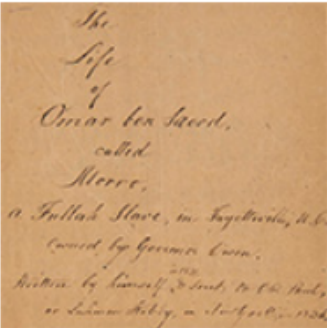
Results: 1-25 of 2,671 | Refined by: Available Online

Refine your results

- Available Online 2,671
- All Items 2,679

Original Format	
Newspaper	2,531
Manuscript/Mixed Material	47
Web Page	43
Book/Printed Material	27
Periodical	13
Film, Video	7
Legislation	1
Photo, Print, Drawing	1
Event	1

View List Go Sort By Relevance Go



COLLECTION  
Omar Ibn Said Collection

Summary: The collection, assembled by Theodore Dwight (1796-1866) includes the autobiographical manuscript written in 1831 by Omar ibn Said (1770-1863 or 1864), in Arabic. This is the only known American slave memoir, written in Arabic, while still in slavery. Includes texts and letters, some written in Arabic, some in English (and translations into English of some texts).

**Contributor:** Cotheal, Alexander Isaac - Kebe, Lamine - American Bible Society - See, Sheikh Sana - Thomson, William Hanna - Bird, Isaac - American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions - Dukur, Muḥammad - Beard, Derrick Joshua - Library of Congress. African and Middle Eastern Division ...

More

**Date:** 1741  
**Collection Items:** View 46 Items



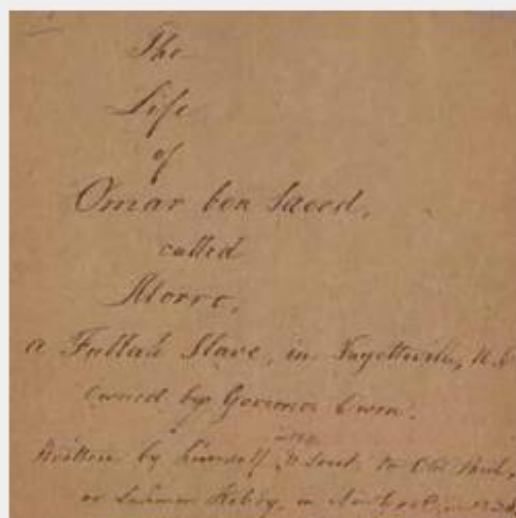
## COLLECTION

# Omar Ibn Said Collection

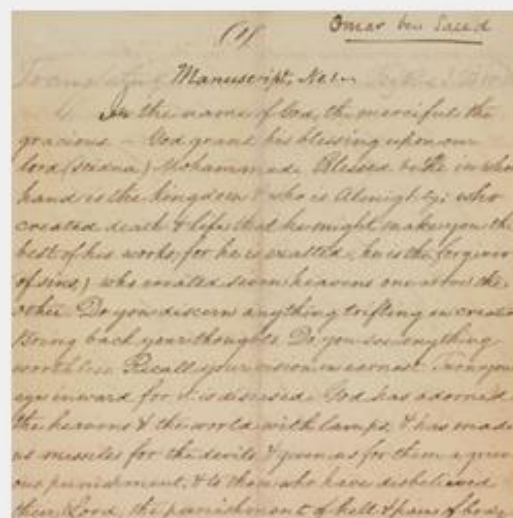
 [About this Collection](#)

[Collection Items](#)

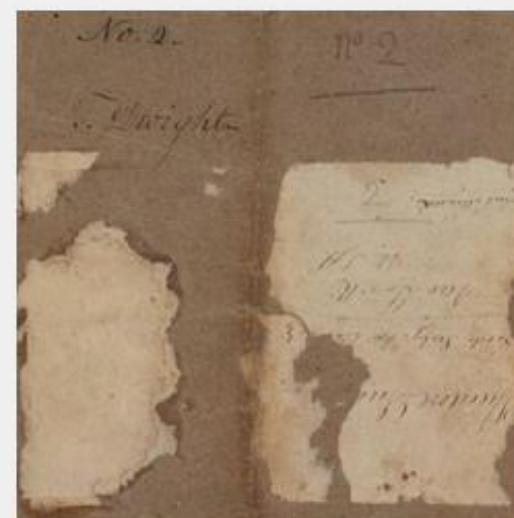
## Featured Content



The life of Omar ben Saeed, called Morro, a Fullah Slave in ...



Translation of the life of Omar ibn Said.



Faṣl fī uṣūl khalq ibra' Adam ...



---

**Who was Omar Ibn Said?**

- Born in 1770 in Futa Toro (present-day Senegal)
- Islamic scholar
- Captured at 37 years old and sold into slavery
- Brought to Charleston, South Carolina
- Autobiography written in 1831



"Africa : to the committee and members of the British association discovering the interior parts of Africa this map is with their permission most respectfully inscribed" (1802):

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/g8200.ct003484>



Half length formal portrait of "Uncle Moreau" [Omar ibn Said]; elderly man seated wearing headwrap, suit; left elbow rests on newel, cane in right hand. From: Randolph Linsly Simpson African-American collection [↗](#)



1

The  
Life  
of  
Omar ben Saad,  
called  
Morro,  
a Futtah Slave, in Fayetteville, N.C.  
owned by Governor Owen.  
Written by himself <sup>in 1836</sup> & sent to Old Paul,  
or Lamon Kebby, in New York, in 1836.  
Presented to Theodore Dwight by Paul in 1836.  
Translated by Mrs. Cathal Esq. 1845.  
(The beginning at the other end.)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم صلى الله على سيدنا  
محمد تبارك الله بيده الملك وهو على كل  
شيء قدير. الذي خلق الموت والحياة ليبلوكم  
ايكم احسن عملا وهو العليم الخبير. الذي  
خلق سبع سموات طباقا ما ترى في خلق  
الرحمن من تجاوزت بهار يوم البعث هل ترى من  
تورثه ارجع البعث ان تيب نفسك اليك  
اليك البصر خاشعا وهو كشير وافد زمير  
السموات الذي تبارك صايحه وجعلنا رجوما  
للشيطان واعطناهم عذابا الشحيحة  
واللذين كفروا بربهم عذابا جهنم وبئس  
المصير. انما الجوا فيها سمعوا وصفا

---

**What is the Omar Ibn Said Collection?**



## COLLECTION

### Omar Ibn Said Collection

About this Collection

Collection Items

#### Featured Content



The life of Omar ben Saeed, called Morro, a Fullah Slave in ...



Translation of the life of Omar ibn Said.



Faṣl fī uṣūl khalq Ibrā' Adam ...



Origin of Man (in English)



Stephen A. Benson letter, Monrovia, Liberia, to Theodore Dwight,...

#### About this Collection

List of Items in the Omar Ibn Said Collection

Related Resources

Rights and Access

#### Expert Resources

Symposium: Omar Ibn Said at the Library of Congress

Podcast: "The Long Journey of Omar Ibn Said"

Video: Preserving Omar Ibn Said's Words

Blogpost: "New Online: Rare 19th Century Autobiography in Arabic by an Enslaved West African Scholar" by Mary-Jane Deeb

Blogpost: "Omar Ibn Said: Transcribing

Listen to this page

## About this Collection

The Omar Ibn Said Collection consists of 42 digitized documents in both English and Arabic, including an 1831 manuscript in Arabic on "The Life of Omar Ibn Said," a West African slave in America, which is the centerpiece of this unique collection of texts. Some of the manuscripts in this collection include texts in Arabic by another West African slave in Panama, and others from individuals located in West Africa.

Who was Omar Ibn Sa'id? According to his autobiography, and to articles written about him in the American press while he was still alive,<sup>[1]</sup> he was a member of the Fula ethnic group of West Africa who today number over 40 million people in the region extending from Senegal to Nigeria. In the interviews he gave during his lifetime he stated that he was born in a place called Futa Toro "between the two rivers" referring to the Senegal and the Gambia rivers that separate those two countries. His father, who was a wealthy man, was killed in an inter-tribal war when he was five, and Omar and his family had to move away to another town. In his autobiography, Omar Ibn Said writes that as he grew older he sought knowledge in Bundu, an area in Senegal today that had historically been controlled by another ethnic group, the Mande people, until the Muslim Fulas conquered the region in the second half of the 17th century. Omar ibn Said writes that in Bundu he studied under his own brother Sheikh Muhammad Said, as well as two other religious leaders and "continued seeking knowledge for twenty five years."<sup>[2]</sup> He



## COLLECTION

# Omar Ibn Said Collection

About this Collection

Collection Items

## Featured Content



The life of Omar ben Saeed, called Morro, a Fullah Slave in ...



Translation of the life of Omar ibn Said.



Faṣl fī uṣūl khalq ibrā' Adam ...



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---

## What are some frequently asked questions inspired by the collection?

- What was the slave trade? In Africa, where were slaves transported from?
- Do you have maps to show where the slaves came from?
- Why did Omar ibn Said write in Arabic? What other languages did he speak?
- Were there other Muslims who were slaves?
- What are some resources for the study of enslavement in America?
- Did other slaves write down their stories? Did their writings survive?

---

## What topics might students explore using this collection?

- Historical research on the enslavement of peoples from Africa
- History of Africa and cultures
- Heritage tracing, genealogy
- Pre-colonization of Africa



---

## Why is this a significant collection for the Library of Congress?

- It is a unique collection of research value and adds substantive content to the story of slavery and the slave trade.
- It is the only known autobiography of an enslaved person written in Arabic.

---

# How can you learn more about Omar Ibn Said and the Collection?

**Explore “Expert Resources” on the collection page, including:**

- [Symposium: Omar Ibn Said at the Library of Congress](#)
- [Podcast: "The Long Journey of Omar Ibn Said"](#)
- [Blogpost: "New Online: Rare 19th Century Autobiography in Arabic by an Enslaved West African Scholar" by Mary-Jane Deeb](#)
- [Blogpost: "Omar Ibn Said: Conserving a One-of-a-Kind Manuscript" by Sylvia Albro](#)
- [Story Map: "Educated and Enslaved: The Journey of Omar Ibn Said"](#)


**Related Resources:** <https://www.loc.gov/collections/omar-ibn-said-collection/about-this-collection/related-resources/>

**Ask-A-Librarian:** <https://www.loc.gov/rr/askalib/ask-amed.html>



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AFRICAN &amp; MIDDLE EASTERN DIVISION, AREA STUDIES

Find  in African and Middle Eastern Pages 

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From left: 18th century Middle East book binding; The Washington Haggadah; Kente Cloth

## Of Special Interest:

**new** [Persian Language Rare Materials](#)

**new** [Eitaher Collection - Palestinian Pamphlets](#)

**new** [Omar Ibn Said Collection](#)

[Abdul-Hamid II Digital Collection of Books and Serials Gifted to the Library of Congress](#)

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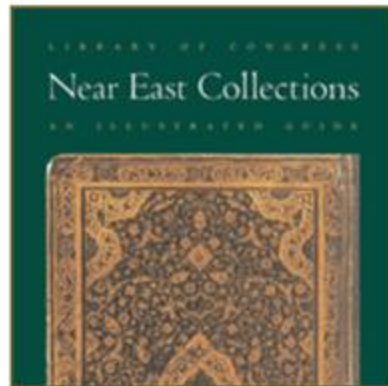
[Research and Reference Services](#)

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## Online Illustrated Guides

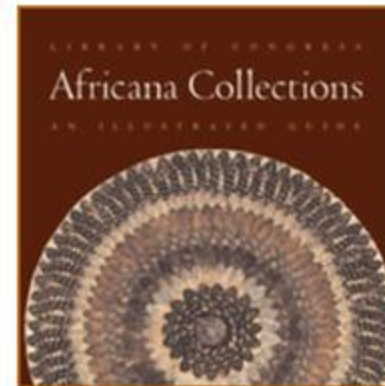
### African & Middle Eastern Collections in the Library of Congress



[Near East Collections:  
An Illustrated Guide](#)



[Hebraic Collections:  
An Illustrated Guide](#)



[Africana Collections:  
An Illustrated Guide](#)

"Online Illustrated Guides": <https://www.loc.gov/rr/amed/guide/>



# Africana Collections

## LIBRARY OF CONGRESS AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE

Foreword by Beverly Gray, Chief, African & Middle Eastern Division  
Introduction and text by Joanne M. Zellers, African Area Specialist

- [Foreword](#)
- [Introduction](#)
- [Overview](#)
- [Creative Expression, Culture and Society](#)
- [African Peoples' Encounters with Others](#)
- [Contemporary African States](#)
- [A Note to Researchers](#)
- [List of Sub-Saharan African Countries](#)
- [Selected Library of Congress Publications on Africa](#)
- [Selected Writings About the Africana Collections](#)
- [Acknowledgments](#)

**Pictured on the Right:** Purchased in Bangui, Central African Republic, in 1981, this example of an art form popular in West and Central Africa is designed in a geometric pattern. Butterfly wings in an abundant variety of colors are gathered by local artists who also fashion from them images of people, animals, or domestic rural scenes.  
(African and Middle Eastern Division)



# Africana Collections

## LIBRARY OF CONGRESS AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE

[HOME](#) ■ [Foreword](#) ■ [Introduction](#) ■ [Overview](#) ■ [Creative Expression, Culture, and Society](#) ■ [African Peoples' Encounters with Others](#) ■ [Contemporary African States](#) ■ [Note to Researchers](#) ■ [List of Sub-Saharan Countries](#) ■ [Publications](#) ■ [Writings](#)

### African Peoples' Encounters With Others

Throughout the centuries, peoples born in the area known as sub-Saharan Africa have interacted on many levels with peoples from elsewhere. The Library of Congress Africana collections are rich in primary documents, facsimiles, and secondary sources in a variety of languages and formats that describe these experiences. Texts, maps, visual images, artifacts, and recordings document the observations of non-Africans as they traveled to parts of the continent and of Africans who encountered them willingly or under coercion. These materials also describe the resistance and adaptation of Africans to the cultural and political onslaught of non-Africans. Diverse resources are available to study the development of commercial and diplomatic relations; the creation and dissolution of colonial governments; and the reestablishment of sovereign nations.



“African Peoples' Encounters With Others”: <https://www.loc.gov/rr/amed/guide/afr-encounters.html>



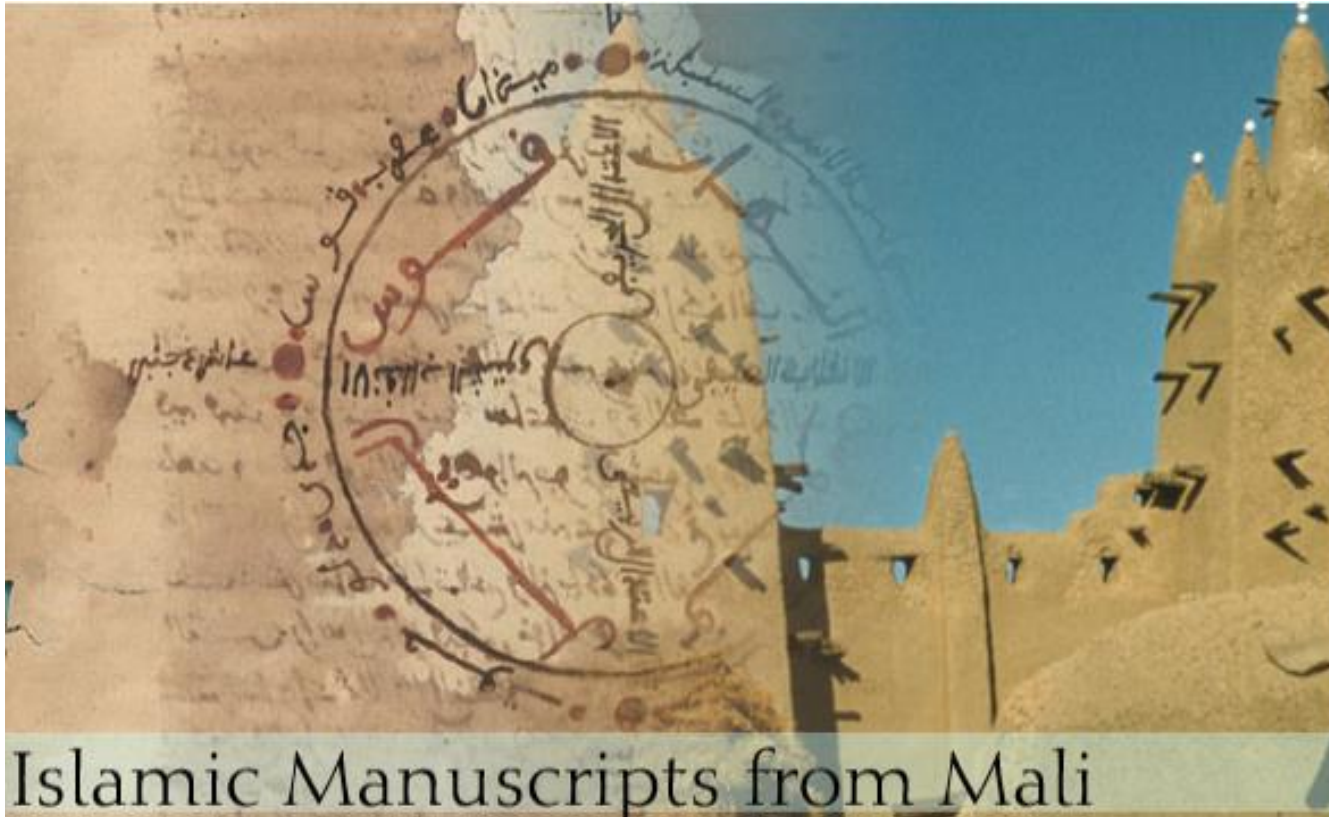
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# Online Library of Congress West African Exhibits



Dating from the 16th to the 18th centuries, the manuscripts presented in this exhibition cover every aspect of human endeavor and are indicative of the high level of civilization attained by West Africans during the Middle Ages.

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/mali/>



Islamic Manuscripts from Mali

Islamic Manuscripts from Mali features 32 manuscripts from the Mamma Haidara Commemorative Library and the Library of Cheick Zayni Baye of Boujbeha, both in Timbuktu, Mali. The manuscripts presented online are displayed in their entirety and are an exemplary grouping that showcases the wide variety of subjects covered by the written traditions of Timbuktu, Mali, and West Africa.

<http://memory.loc.gov/intldl/malihtml/malihome.html>





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Constitution

Contemporary United States

(1945-present)

Copyright

Culture and Folklife

Development of the Industrial

United States (1877-1914)

Exploration, Colonization and

Settlement (1492-1763)

Fine and Performing Arts

Geography and Maps

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Holidays

Immigration

Industrial United States,

World Wars and the Great

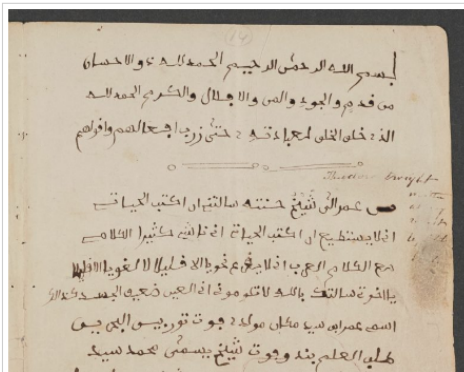
## Expanding Student Understanding of Slavery in America by Exploring an Arabic Muslim Slave Narrative

March 12, 2019 by Cheryl Lederle

*This post is by Michael Apfeldorf of the Library of Congress.*

How much do your students know about American slavery or the individuals who were brought to the United States to be enslaved?

In the January-February 2019 issue of *Social Education*, the journal of the National Council for the Social Studies, our "Sources and Strategies" article discusses the [Life of Omar ibn Said](#), the only known extant narrative written in Arabic by an enslaved person in the United States. Analyzing this unique manuscript provides students with an opportunity to expand their understanding of some of the people who were brought to the United States from Africa to be enslaved. How educated were they? What did they believe?



Omar ibn Said was born in West Africa around 1770 to a wealthy family. He was both a practicing Muslim and highly educated. About the time he was 37 years old, Said was captured and brought to the United States, where he spent the rest of his life in captivity. In 1831, at the age of 61, Said composed an autobiography in Arabic describing his experiences. This manuscript was later translated into English and disseminated at the direction of Theodore Dwight. Dwight, who was staunchly opposed to the spread of slavery, was a member of the [New York Colonization Society](#), and a founding member of the American Ethnological Society with an interest in West African culture and slaves. The Library's [Omar ibn Said Collection](#) contains original Said manuscripts, English-language translations,

"Expanding Student Understanding of Slavery in America by Exploring an Arabic Muslim Slave Narrative" (2019 blog post): <http://blogs.loc.gov/teachers/2019/03/expanding-student-understanding-of-slavery-in-america-by-exploring-a-arabic-muslim-slave-narrative/>

## "Student Filmmakers Inspired by the Omar Ibn Said Collection" (2019 blog post):

<http://blogs.loc.gov/teachers/2019/04/student-filmmakers-inspired-by-the-omar-ibn-said-collection/>



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Immigration

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World Wars and the Great

Depression (1914-1945)

Interviews with Experts

Lesson Ideas

National Expansion and

Reform (1816-1861)

Native American Heritage

## Student Filmmakers Inspired by the Omar Ibn Said Collection

April 2, 2019 by Danna Bell

*This post was written by Lee Ann Potter and Kaleena Black of the Library of Congress.*

Earlier this month, Michael Apfeldorf's post "[Expanding Student Understanding of Slavery in America by Exploring an Arabic Muslim Slave Narrative](#)" introduced blog readers to the [Omar Ibn Said Collection](#). This post adds details about the collection and a related pilot program we launched with two local high schools.

Shortly after the Library of Congress acquired the collection, plans for making it accessible to researchers began, including its digitization, a related symposium, and associated press releases. The Library also decided to try something new. Members of the Learning and Innovation team contacted two local high schools with active media production programs for students and asked whether they might be interested in learning about this collection and helping us tell its story through film. Fortunately, they said yes, and between October and early February we worked with 13 sophomores, juniors, and seniors, and 3 teachers, from Montgomery Blair High School in Silver Spring, MD, and Richard Wright Public Charter School for Journalism and Media Arts in Washington, DC.



The Library hosts a panel conversation with student filmmakers on the Omar Ibn Said collection, February 5, 2019. Photo by Shawn Miller.



Student filmmakers from Richard Wright Public Charter School talk about their documentary during a panel conversation on the Omar Ibn Said collection, February 5, 2019. Photo by Shawn Miller.

The young filmmakers absorbed a wealth of information over several months and documented their journey along the way. Many of the students initially admitted that they were unfamiliar with Omar Ibn Said. Over the course of the



**Thank you!**

**Questions? Post them in the chat box!**

